

Lobbying: General Information and Instructions

REGISTRATION: Pursuant to the County's Public Ethics Law at Chapter 19A, Article V of the Montgomery County Code and except as provided in that law, any individual or organization must register as a lobbyist if that individual or organization:

Spends more than \$500 or receives more than \$500 to communicate with a public employee to influence legislative action by a County agency; or

Spends more than \$500 on meals, beverages, transportation, lodging, services, special events or gifts to influence executive or administrative action by a County agency.

Registration is accomplished by accessing the online registration system at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/lobbyists, creating an account and following the detailed Lobby Registration Form Instructions. The Form must be filed no later than five days after the activity that triggered the registration requirement.

Effective Dates of Registration: A registration is effective when the Ethics Commission acknowledges receipt of the original paper registration form with required registration fees and lasts until the earlier of the period identified on the registration form, the end of the year for which the registration is made, or the date the EC is notified that the registration is cancelled.

Notice of Termination: A lobbyist may file a notice terminating the effectiveness of a registration with the Commission. A semi-annual activity report must be filed with the termination notice for the period from the end of the last prior semi-annual period to the date of termination.

Annual Registration Fee: The Public Ethics Law and implementing regulations require, annually, a \$125 registration fee with respect to each lobbyist for each registration filed. Lobbyists at an organization or firm who wish register multiple lobbyists from the organization or firm on the same registration may do so, but a \$125 annual registration fee is required for each person listed (except those not required to register because they do not meet registration thresholds in section 19A-21 of the Public Ethics Law.)

SEMI-ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORTS: Each registered lobbyist is required to file semi-annual reports of activities for each registration on file by the end of the month following the end of each semi-annual period for which the lobbyist is registered. For the semi-annual period ending June 30, the Lobbying Activity Report is required to be filed by July 31 of that year. Likewise, the Lobbying Activity Report for the semi-annual period ending December 31 must be filed by the following January 31. An activity report must be filed for a reporting period for which a lobbyist is registered even if the lobbyist engages in no lobbying activities and has no reportable compensation or expenses in that period.

NOTICE ON PROHIBITION ON CONTINGENT COMPENSATION: A person may not be employed as a lobbyist for compensation that depends on or varies with the success or defeat of any legislative, administrative or executive action by a County agency or upon any other contingency connected with any action of the County Government.

PENALTIES AND SANCTIONS: A violation of the lobbying provisions of the Public Ethics Law may be punished as a misdemeanor, with fines of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both, per violation. Each day a violation continues constitutes a separate offense. If the lobbyist is a business entity and not a natural person, each officer and partner of the business entity who knowingly authorized or participated in the violation is guilty

of the misdemeanor and, upon conviction, is subject to these same penalties.

Questions may be referred to the Ethics Commission by email to:
Ethics.Commission@montgomerycountymd.gov